




MOOD: 😞 gloomy

MUSIC: Crooked Still - Undone In Sorrow



standuponit

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2009-01-27 16:07:00

I had to fight with myself about it, but I sent Ronnie to look for Vernon Weatherbee's Camaro. Honestly, I wouldn't trust Ronnie to question a can of tuna, much less a teenager.

So I got to go back to the high school. Lucky me.

The morning was football players. The afternoon was a mix of cheerleaders and girls from Vernon's AP classes. Where the boys had all been closed off and trying not to show any emotion, the girls tended to start crying before they sat down. And Peggy Marie was the only one who I'm sure wasn't using it to keep from having to talk to me. The rest of them, I can't tell.

But around the weeping, I got what I think is a pretty clear picture. Vernon was fun to hang out with. He was funny and he had a car and he had plenty of spending money (working afternoons and weekends in his dad's hardware store) which he didn't mind sharing. And Freddy Carmody was right. None of these girls had gone on dates with Vernon. They'd just hung out with him. Most of them thought he was kind of an asshole for the way he treated Peggy Marie, although nobody came out and said so, and I got the picture, a piece here and a piece there, that Vernon had been an asshole in other ways, that sometimes when he was funny, it was at other people's expense. Not that that's anything unusual for teenagers.

Nobody mentioned Alma Finnister, and she was the last person I talked to. Partly because she was the piece that didn't fit--the anomaly in the picture of Vernon Weatherbee I was building--and partly because, being the anomaly, she was my best candidate for those footprints, and I wanted her off balance.

Ganging up with myself against a teenage girl. I'm a real prince.

And boy, you could write a book on the ways Alma Finnister didn't fit. CCHS students aren't a real eclectic bunch. Oh, there's some kids who wear black and some kids who wear flannel, but mostly it's t-shirts and jeans, polo shirts and chinos, and the girls wear kinky skirts when they feel like it. Alma Finnister was wearing a dress. A calf-length floral print dress that looked like she'd

borrowed it from her maiden aunt librarian if she had one. She was skinny, with bad posture and a bad complexion; her hair was mouse-brown, straight headed towards lank, and she had it pinned off her face with two barrettes like a girl about half her age. I don't know what color her eyes are, because she never once looked anywhere near my face.

And she lied.

She was a bad liar, and she was obviously scared out of her wits, but she had one thing going for her: she was stubborn as a mule. Her position was, she didn't know Vernon Weatherbee and she certainly hadn't seen him at all yesterday, and she stuck to it, even though she knew I knew it wasn't true.

And I didn't feel like getting out the rubber hoses and the bright lights, not least because Linda Hogan was still giving me the stink-eye. So after we'd been around the thing like a damn maypole three or four times, I let her go and went to find out how Ronnie was doing. Because really, she told me everything I needed with that lie. She *did* know Vernon Weatherbee, and she *had* seen him yesterday, but to get more than that--and to get something that wasn't a proof by opposites--I need some leverage. Which would be that Camaro.

Which, of course, Ronnie hasn't found.

TAGS: [down the rabbit hole](#)



This looks like a
good idea.

...

This.

...

Little guy's not
bad.

Gotta teach RHex
to smear.

4 comments



[glinda_w](#)


[January 28 2009, 01:24:48 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

More, please?

(Wow.)




 [barsukthom](#)

[January 28 2009, 02:23:00 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Poor Ronnie. Sounds like the kind of guy who couldn't poor piss out of a boot if the instructions were printed on the bottom.



 [trollcatz](#)

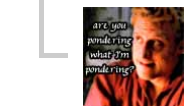
[January 28 2009, 02:39:49 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


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 [barsukthom](#)

[January 28 2009, 04:17:24 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I can't take credit for it. I got it from David Drake, who probably learned it in the Service.
But, some folks, it describes too well.